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## Talking Points for the DCI

The 27th Soviet Party Congress

The Soviet party congress that convenes on 25 February will be an important milestone in Gorbachev's consolidation of power and, judging from the preliminary evidence, a meeting quite unlike the last one held in 1981.

This congress will include the traditional agenda items:

- A review by the General Secretary of Soviet foreign and domestic policies over the past five years and an assessment of present and future requirements
- A report from the Premier on the basic guidelines for the next five-year economic plan
- The "election" of a new Central Committee and Central Auditing Commission

This time, however, judging from the republic party congresses now being held, Gorbachev will be presiding over a congress that will be highly critical of past economic performance and of the policy drift that prevailed under Brezhnev.

- criticism of Brezhnev, including the "personality cult" that surrounded him, will be a major theme of Gorbachev's speech. 25X1
- In Kirgizia, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan the previous party chiefs have been attacked by name, and at last week's city conference in Moscow, the criticism of Politburo member and former Moscow party chief Grishin was very thinly veiled.
- The available texts of speeches from the republic party congresses indicate a marked decline in flattering references to the General Secretary--a trend that presumably reflects Gorbachev's reported distaste for Brezhnev-era obsequiousness.

The guidelines for the 12th five-year plan (1986-90), previously released in draft form, also will echo familiar Gorbachev themes --the acceleration of economic growth through the modernization of industry, reduction of waste, and increased worker effort.

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Gorbachev probably will emphasize the need to make more progress on arms control and to build on the improvement in US-Soviet relations resulting from his meeting with President Reagan in Geneva.

- He could use the Congress to issue some new proposals in that area, although the range of domestic issues to be dealt with probably makes this a less likely possibility.

In contrast to the last party congress, when only about 20 percent of the membership in the Central Committee and Central Auditing Commission was replaced, this congress is expected to approve a turnover of at least 40 percent.

- This high turnover in the party's "leading organs" will tighten Gorbachev's grasp on the levers of power and reinforce his authority.

The most unusual business to be conducted at this congress will be approval of revisions in the party program--left untouched for 25 years--and rules.

- The new party program, approved in draft at the October 1985 plenum, will replace the embarrassingly unrealistic objectives espoused by Khrushchev with more general language that gives the leadership maximum flexibility to pursue a wide range of policy options.
- This document, too, bears Gorbachev's strong imprint and reportedly was held up by revisions he ordered in a draft that was nearly completed when he became General Secretary.

Finally, the Congress also may see a number of additional changes in the leadership that will help complete the "changing of the guard."

- The change that seems most certain is the removal from the Politburo of Viktor Grishin, a Brezhnevite who recently lost his job as Moscow party boss.
- Boris Yel'tsin, Grishin's successor in Moscow, is rumored to be in line for full membership in the Politburo. If he should keep his membership in the Secretariat, Yel'tsin would join Gorbachev and Ligachev as the only leaders who hold that coveted dual status.
- Another likely candidate for promotion is Vsevolod Murakhovskiy, a First Deputy Premier and chairman of the new State Agro-industrial Committee
- Leaders whose positions are currently rumored to be

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shaky include Politburo members Aliyev, Kunayev, and Shcherbitskiy, candidate Politburo members Kuznetsov and Ponomarev and party secretaries Rusakov and Zimyanin.

While the Congress almost certainly will strengthen Gorbachev's position, he still may be facing considerable opposition on some issues--even from recent appointees.

- For example, Ligachev--Gorbachev's second-in-command who presumably has played a strong role in recent personnel changes--has expressed little enthusiasm for Gorbachev's management reform efforts, placing greater emphasis on the need for increased discipline.
- Recent articles in the Soviet press suggest that Gorbachev's apparent support for a limited expansion of the private sector in agriculture and the services area also has encountered opposition.

Indicators that Gorbachev is overcoming some of the footdragging and opposition he has faced in the past could include:

- An announcement of a comprehensive management reform program that would include the consolidation of related ministries and agencies in construction, transportation, and other sectors
- The addition of a new provision in the party rules--which Gorbachev reportedly favors but has been unable to push through--that would limit the tenure of party officials.